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Special Analysis

HAITI:

Implications of Aristide Landslide

Leftist priest Jean Bertrand Aristide almost certainly views his landslide victory as a mandate to make major socioeconomic changes and eliminate Duvalierist influence. The magnitude of his victory probably will keep potential military coup plotters in check for now, but rightwing extremists are likely to begin planning his demise.

Aristide and his advisers lack administrative experience, and his program for running Haiti is vague. Moreover, the constitution may compel him to choose a prime minister from another party unless his own forces have won an outright majority in the legislature. Complete legislative results are not yet available, however.

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Key Duvalierists are desperate to prevent Aristide from taking office on 7 February. They probably will be reluctant to follow through on threats to kill him, however, unless the military condones such action. Meanwhile, they probably will try to exploit fears in the Army to build support for their plans. If Duvalierist leaders fail to muster military backing, they are likely to flee Haiti and continue plotting from abroad. Nevertheless, an attack on Aristide by rank-and-file Duvalierists remains a real possibility.

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After official announcement of the election results, plans to travel to several countries, including the US, in an effort to reduce the threat to his security and enhance his prestige.

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20 December 1990

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